DEMOCRATIC
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"SELL US YOUR SURPLUS COAL"

Berlin Government Offer to West Germany

The German Democratic Republic is ready to purchase immediately four million tons of coal from West Germany, Deputy Prime Minister Heinrich Rau announced at a press conference in East Berlin on October 10th.

West Germany possesses at present many millions of tons of coal which it is unable to sell, and miners are being sacked or put on short time. The sale of a large quantity of coal to Democratic Germany would ease the situation in the coal industry, and help the West German miners, Minister Rau stated.

In addition, the German Democratic Republic would like to purchase 200,000 tons of rolled steel, and some 80 million marks worth of chemicals, shoes and textiles from West Germany. These purchases would help other branches of West German industry which are running into a depression, and at the same time would help to develop the German Democratic Republic.

Minister Rau stated that Democratic Germany was ready to supply, in return, four million tons of soft coal for domestic use; 650,000 tons of wheat, 40,000 tons of sugar, and 20,000 tons of pork, all of them goods which West Germany needs to import.

Minister Rau stressed that the big purchase offer was supplementary to the normal trade between the two parts of Germany, and that in addition the German Democratic Republic was ready to act as middleman to help arrange the export of West German goods to other socialist countries.

Previous trade offers by the German Democratic Republic have usually been ignored or made fun of by the West German press, but this latest offer was reported factually in most newspapers, and West German industrialists were reported to be reviewing the offer very seriously.

Want to Talk to Britain's Gestapo Boss?

Would you like to have a talk to the nazi veteran appointed by Hitler to serve as boss of the Gestapo in occupied Britain? Then put in a trunk call to Darmstadt 6054 in West Germany.

It is the telephone number of Professor Franz Six, one-time colonel of the SS, who was named by Hitler to act as chief of the Gestapo in Britain when he was planning to carry the war across the channel in 1940.

When the invasion plans broke down, Professor Six served in the SS murder squads on the eastern front, and was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment for war crimes by an American court in 1948. He was released in 1952.

Today he owns the "Leske" publishing house, which puts out books such as the "Dictionary of Politics" which has just been published. The definition of "National Socialism" in this dictionary reads as follows: "National Socialism — a movement which arose in Germany for the solution of contemporary problems, many of which are still unsolved today..."

If Hitler had succeeded in occupying Britain in 1940, Professor Six would have tried to solve its "contemporary problems" with concentration camps and gas chambers.

This fact was revealed recently by Mr Ronald Wheatley, member of the British Cabinet Office Historical Section, in his book "Operation Sea Lion" (Clarendon Press, 1958). Captured German documents, Mr Wheatley reports, show that Professor Six was to command special Einsatzgruppen operating from London, Bristol, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester and Edinburgh. These special police groups were to "establish a reign of terror, not by mass murder but by taking selected leaders and intellectuals into protective custody — which might very well mean death... Persons likely to be of any value for interrogation were also to be arrested, a fate which almost certainly involved torture on the lines established by the sickening evidence at Nuremberg, and the setting up of a Gestapo prison was given as one of the first tasks."

Professor Six was equipped for his task with a "Special Search List" containing a list of 2700 prominent persons marked for automatic arrest, and details of a number "dangerous bodies" including such oddly assorted organisations as the YMCA, the Communist Party, and the Salvation Army.

The list of persons whom Professor Six was ordered to arrest in Britain included politicians such as Winston Churchill, Mr Attlee, Harold MacMillan, Harry Pollitt and Lady Violet Bonham Carter; artists such as Jakob Epstein, Paul Robeson, Sybil Thorndike and Noel Coward; writers such as J. B. Priestley, Aldous Huxley and Kingsley Martin; and trade union leaders including Will Lawther and Arthur Horner.

SOVIET MOVE THWARTS ADENAUER CAMPAIGN

A clearly worded Soviet declaration, delivered by the Soviet Ambassador in Bonn to Chancellor Adenauer on October 14th, ended a new West German propaganda campaign to confuse world public opinion on the real facts of the German problem.

For several weeks previously West German political leaders and propaganda agencies had been whipping up a campaign against the German Democratic Republic with allegations which may be summarised as follows:

1. There is a reign of terror in East Germany.
2. We in West Germany want to free our brothers and sisters from this reign of terror.
3. The German Democratic Republic does not exist, and we can therefore not discuss any points at issue with its government.
4. The Soviet Government really rules East Germany, so we shall make representations to the Soviet Union.

Finally, on October 14th, Chancellor Adenauer arranged to meet Andrei Smirnov, Soviet Ambassador to West Germany, and demanded Soviet intervention in the affairs of the German Democratic Republic.

The Soviet representative pointed out that the German Democratic Republic was a sovereign state, and that there could be no question of Soviet interference.

The Soviet ambassador presented Chancellor Adenauer with an aide memoire from his government explaining this point, and drawing the attention of the West German Government to the increasing anti-Soviet propaganda in West Germany.

The declaration emphasised that the Soviet Government continued to favour broadly based cooperation between the Soviet Union and the German Federal Republic (West Germany), and continued:

"Up to date a number of measures for developing cooperation between the two states, upon which agreement had already been reached, have not been carried out. Thus, for instance, talks on the conclusion of agreements for cultural and scientific exchange have been long delayed and the development of contacts between statesmen and politicians of both countries hindered.

"The Soviet Union has done everything necessary for carrying out the measures agreed upon, and there was no lack of practical suggestions on further steps to be taken for this purpose. Unfortunately, these suggestions have often been rejected by the German Federal Republic; moreover, no initiative has been taken by the Federal Republic.

"There are also tendencies evident in the policy of the Federal Republic towards the Soviet Union which not only hinder the development of good relations between the two countries but also threaten to throw them back.

"The Soviet Union has repeatedly pointed out how much damage is done by the propaganda put out in the Federal Republic. This question received special attention during the Soviet delegation's visit to the German Federal Republic. But there has been no change whatever in the policy of the Federal Republic in this field.

"There are many indications that those forces in the Federal Republic which aim at stirring up enmity towards the Soviet Union amongst the West German population and blocking further development of good relations between their two countries are becoming more active.

"The Inspector-General of the German Federal Army, General Heusinger, recently made an aggressive statement to the effect that the Federal Army now has to fulfil the same tasks as those which faced the Hitlerite army. The statement was not condemned by the Federal Government.

"It is easy to understand what feelings are aroused in the Soviet Union by such statements... The Soviet Union has grounds enough to dislike and hate West Germany. But the Soviet Government does not encourage such feelings; it tries to draw a line through the past and to awaken genuine feelings of friendship for the German people...

"These efforts unfortunately do not meet with the sympathy of the Federal German government. What other explanation can there be of the increasing anti-Soviet propaganda in the Federal Republic?

The note then gives details of anti-Soviet books and films now being popularised in West Germany.

"In a recent speech Defence Minister Strauss announced that a body is to be set up which will be devoted to the propaganda war against the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. The Federal Press and Information Office, the Federal Chancellery, the Defence Ministry and some Federal parliamentary commissions will co-operate with this body.

"The Soviet Government must also take into account repeated statements of official representatives of the Federal Government that further developments in relations between the Federal Government and the Soviet Government are in fact dependent upon the extent to which the Soviet Government supports the German Federal Government in its interference in the internal affairs of the Government of the German Democratic Republic.

"It should be perfectly clear that the relations between two states cannot be made dependent upon the situation in a third sovereign state. Lemmer, Minister for All-German Questions of the German Federal Republic, nevertheless stated in a government declaration in the Federal Parliament that an improvement in relations with the Soviet Union depended 'to a great extent' on the situation in the German Democratic Republic.

... Herr Lemmer makes a worsening of relations between the USSR and the German Democratic Republic a condition for an improvement in relations between the USSR and the German Federal Republic. Such speculations are unrealistic; the Soviet Union would never agree to build up her relations with any state on such a basis.

"The Soviet Union, desiring to contribute to the development of relations between the USSR and the German Federal Republic, deems it necessary to state its opinion frankly in this question. It hopes that the points raised in this note will meet with the consideration of the Federal Government and that the necessary steps will be taken to improve relations step by step and thus to contribute to a lasting peace."

POET-MINISTER DIES

Johannes R. Becher, Minister of Culture of the German Democratic Republic, died in Berlin after a long illness on October 11th. Becher, who made a name for himself in German literature by poems written in the 20's, was 67. An obituary message from the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party, of which Becher was a member, referred to him as "the greatest German poet of modern times".

Johannes R. Becher was born into a prosperous middle-class family in Munich in 1891. He published his first expressionist poems as a student of 20. During the First World War he adopted an anti-militarist attitude, and associated himself with the working class movement against the war.

During the pre-Hitler Weimar Republic, Becher, who had joined the Communist Party, was involved in several court cases because of his anti-militarist writings. After Hitler came to power he was forced to emigrate, and spent most of the nazi period in the Soviet Union, where he edited an anti-fascist literary magazine.

Returning to East Germany after the war, he played an important part in cultural life, becoming President of the German Academy of Arts, and in 1954 Minister of Culture of the German Democratic Republic. He was the author of the national anthem of the German Democratic Republic.

On October 15th Johannes R. Becher was honoured by a state funeral in East Berlin.

Compensation for Nazi Bigwigs

"The Times" Gives the Facts

On October 8th the London "Times" commented on the disparity between the compensation paid in West Germany to ex-nazis and to their victims. Here in full is this significant article by the Bonn correspondent of "The Times":

"Former German inmates of concentration camps received compensation to no more than £45 for each year spent there, while the former commandant of the Sachsenhausen camp was paid £500, and a former SS doctor at Buchenwald nearly £2,500. Much of this was paid as a special grant to help him set up a new practice.

"A State secretary who served loyally under Hitler receives a monthly pension of £225; a man incapacitated by years in concentration camps only £27. Former political prisoners who served a total of 99,242 years in camps and prisons have received in all rather less than £4,500,000; this year alone the Federal Government will pay about £115m in pensions to dismissed officials and former professional soldiers.

"These figures and many more have been produced by the Social Democratic Party after the refusal of the Federal Government of its request to afford belated justice to former political prisoners. It claims that many survived years of concentration camp treatment only to commit suicide when met with official lack of sympathy and understanding.

"The Refugee Ministry stated that it helped them as much as it could, and referred to letters of gratitude received. The Social Democrats say that these must have been written by former Nazi officials and generals. While the victims of the Nazis have to fight for meagre compensation, the Federal courts have in many cases granted the high claims of ex-Nazis.

"The Social-Democrats have published a list of pensions and compensation paid to former Nazis. Among them are: Dr Ernst Lautz, former Attorney General of the Third Reich, monthly pension of 786 marks (about £65); Dr Erich Gritzbach, who was Goering's personal assistant, monthly pension of 1,293 marks (about £108); Frau Heydrich, widow of the former Protector of Bohemia, special pension of 1,000 marks a month (about £80); Walter Schroeder, former Nazi police chief of Luebeck, lump sum of 65,000 marks (about £5,400 and monthly pension of 1,200 Marks (about £100).

"The Social Democratic Party added that service under the Third Reich had turned out to be a good investment."

NATIONAL PRIZES FOR ARTISTS, SCIENTISTS

Hanns Eisler, internationally renowned composer, was amongst the men and women of the German Democratic Republic who were awarded the National Prize for outstanding achievement on October 7th. Professor Hanns Eisler is best known outside Germany for his film music, and for many famous workers' songs of the thirties such as "Red Wedding", "Left-Right-Left", and "You Must Get Ready to Take Over". The second National Prize, First Class, in the field of the arts was awarded to Professor Fritz Cremer, outstanding sculptor responsible for the main sculpture in the newly dedicated memorial at Buchenwald Concentration Camp.

National Prizes, First Class, in the fields of science and technology were awarded to Professor Peter-Adolf Thiessen for his work on nuclear technology and colloid chemistry, and to Professor Manfred von Ardenne, inventor of the cathode ray tube.

German-Arab Society Founded

The "German-Arab Society in the German Democratic Republic" was established at a meeting in East Berlin on October 10th. The Society aims at improving relations between Democratic Germany and all the Arab countries. The new society received a telegram of greetings from Jussef es Sebai, Secretary General of the Asian-African Solidarity Committee in Cairo.

SOCIAL DEMOCRATS IN RETREAT?

Policy Criticised by Socialist Unity Party Paper

The East Berlin newspaper "Neues Deutschland", central organ of the Socialist Unity Party, devoted a long leading article on October 14th to the present policy of the Social Democratic Party in West Germany, generally known by the abbreviation "SPD". Here are some of the main points from this leading article:

The political line which has been followed by the leadership of the SPD in the past few weeks does not conform with the political responsibility which the SPD owes to the German working class and the entire German nation.

In his speech to the 3rd Congress of the National Front, Comrade Walter Ulbricht (First Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party) pointed out the dangers of this development. The main attack of the "Psychological Warfare" which forms a part of the atomic armament policy of German militarism, is directed against the working class, the Social Democrats, and the trade unions in West Germany. Walter Ulbricht stressed that the power of the workers and peasants in the German Democratic Republic was so stable that the psychological warriors would not have much success in the Democratic Republic: but what would happen to the Social Democrats and trade Unions in West Germany? Some of the Social Democratic leaders are retreating: they talk about "defending the fatherland", and are ready to participate in the psychological warfare of Strauss (West German Defence Minister). Many Social Democratic comrades are extremely worried that various leaders will take the same path as Mollet, the path of capitulation to the militarists and facists.

Three weeks have passed since Walter Ulbricht made his speech, and in this period the dangerous policy of the SPD leadership has become even clearer.

The clearest demonstration of the submission of the SPD to Adenauer's policy was given at the session of the (West German) Federal Parliament in West Berlin. The SPD cooperated obediently in the lying propaganda campaign of hatred against the German Democratic Republic launched by the Christian Democrats ... There were at that time some optimists amongst the membership of the SPD who said "This unity in Berlin was only a facade", but these optimists were disappointed, once again. Dr Mommer, leader of the parliamentary group of the SPD, declared on October 8th that the SPD group would be able to maintain "unity with the Christian Democrats in all-German questions".

The abandonment of the SPD of its own policy in the German question means at the same time abandonment of opposition to atomic armament, since the main content of the German question is the question of keeping the peace. Anybody who considers seriously the solution of the German question must first answer the question: "Are you in favour of a militarist Germany, or of a peace-loving Germany?" Today this question has become even sharper, and can be put in this form: "Do you want atomic armament and the road to ruin, or will you fight consistently against atomic armament?"

In the beginning the SPD leadership came out in favour of the popular movement against atomic death. Then, under pressure from the Christian Democrats, it retreated, and adopted a passive neutral policy. Now it is approaching step by step the policy of the atomic arms party.

In a press conference, Strauss demanded that the SPD should prove its support for "defence of the fatherland" by practical cooperation. Erler (SPD leader) said that the SPD took the question of defence of the fatherland very seriously. Strauss demanded cooperation in psychological warfare: Erler said that the "struggle with Communism" was necessary. Strauss demanded cooperation in civil defence, and the creation of air defence with the most modern weapons — that is to say with atomic rockets: Erler said that in view of the coming atom conference in Geneva this was not the time for the Federal Republic to press so strongly for atomic arms. His remarks on the timing of the step must be regarded as an acceptance of the principle of atomic armament ...

On October 8th, the Central Board of the West German Trade Union Federation decided that it would not hold a referendum amongst its members on the atomic armament of West Germany. It is clear that such a decision could not have been made if the SPD had opposed it.

Attention must also be drawn to a speech made at the Party Conference of the SPD in South Hesse by Provincial Prime Minister Zinn. He carefully avoided all political themes, and indignantly defended himself against the allegation that the provincial government of Hesse was different from the general line of the Adenauer Government.

It is thus clear that some SPD leaders are not just weak in their support for the popular movement against atomic death: they are in fact stabbing the movement in the back ...

The SPD is retreating, but this is not taming the imperialists. On the contrary, they are demanding more and more from the SPD: now they demand total capitulation. They demand that the SPD should take the same path as Mollet, and that it should give its full approval to the clerical-militarist dictatorship of Adenauer ...

The militarists are preparing to use the sharpest methods against the opposition. They want to "coordinate" the SPD and the trade unions. The SPD will be forced to make a decision: either to capitulate, or to fight.

Some SPD leaders are obviously well along the road to capitulation. The question is whether the members and supporters of the party, the millions of workers organised in the trade unions will bow down to Adenauer. The answer to this question is no: if the workers realise the danger, this will not happen ...

At the 3rd Congress of the National Front Walter Ulbricht proposed that all supporters of peace in both German states should answer the militarists in Bonn with their own peace plan. Our proposals for the conclusion of a peace treaty and the formation of a confederation of the two German states are the only realistic plans for the solution of the German problem. These problems are not affected by the differences of opinion between us and the Social Democrats on various questions of socialism. In the struggle against atomic armament and against the militarists we can go forward side by side. There are no real reasons for the SPD to lose its nerves and to capitulate: together we are strong enough to dash the atom bomb from the hands of Adenauer and Strauss.

A NEW SORT OF SCHOOL

By Joan Becker

"And now you can see how tidy we keep our room", said my eleven year-old son Bernard, proudly flinging open the door.

I looked into the drawers and the wardrobe, and sure enough, clothes and books were quite tidy; only the four beds looked a bit lumpy.

I had come with hundreds of other parents to visit the "Young Pioneer Republic" on Lake Werbellin, a couple of hours' journey from Berlin, where my son and his class-mates are spending three months, along with nearly a thousand other Berlin school children between nine and twelve years of age.

The idea of building the "republic" first came up in 1949 and by 1951 funds were available for it — eighteen million marks. The first half was completed in 1952 and the second half a year later, and ever since then groups of Young Pioneers from schools all over the German Democratic Republic, as well as from other countries, have come here for two or three months at a time, as a special recognition of good work at school.

It was originally planned to make it more than twice as big, but this would have meant cutting down many more of the beautiful old trees which cover the hillside sloping steeply down to the shores of a clear, spring-water lake.

Bernard told me the legend connected with it, too; long ago, there was a prosperous town called Werbelow here, and a castle surrounded by a moat. A wicked wizard lived in the castle and no strangers were allowed in.

One day a strange woman begged to be let in, but the wizard drove her away. "Very well", she said. "I shall go away; but you and your town are doomed."

Before she left, the woman warned one good old man and his servant to leave at once. The old man forgot his knapsack in the excitement, so he sent his servant back for it. But the servant soon returned empty-handed, for the town had vanished beneath a broad lake.

This time the experiment has been tried of taking complete classes from several schools, but all in Berlin, mainly to help children to get to know each other better and to develop a more collective spirit amongst them, but also, of course, to give them a taste of country life and to send them back to the Berlin winter in tip-top health. Anybody who has lived for years, as I have, in a crowded central district, will appreciate what this means to the children.

There are forty buildings scattered along the lake shore, and it took Bernard nearly all day to show me everything — two fully equipped schools, each for five hundred children, two big canteen buildings with pleasantly lit and decorated dining-rooms, a gymnasium, library, cinema, club-house and fifteen houses with broad verandahs to catch the sun, each housing eighty children and some staff.

There are gardens and grass and trees between the houses and down by the lake there is a landing stage with boats. The lake bed is clean, pale sand and it slopes gradually, so it is quite safe for bathing. The water is so clear that you can see ripples on the fine sand beneath, and there are no troublesome fresh-water weeds.

The boys are especially taken with the sports stadium — a real stadium with grandstand, raised seats, loud-speakers and changing rooms.

In the workshops of the "Pioneer Republic"

While we were down there we went on to the club- house, where there is a carpenters' shop, a photographers' room, model shipbuilding and aeroplane building workshops and so on. Bernard had started a model ship, his best friend is taking a first-aid course and the whole group had already made some fine kites on wooden frames, although they had only been there a fortnight.

But what about school? We parents were invited to a short parents' meeting before lunch, where we met the house mother, the young man who looks after the children in their free time and their class teacher Frau Schmidt.

She told us quite frankly that our children were a pretty noisy bunch and that she had to take a very firm line with them, but we were relieved to hear that they are not by any means the worst.

The house mother explained, too, that she had to be very strict with them about clearing up after themselves. But I got the impression from Bernard and his friends that they took it all in good part — even to scrubbing the tiles in the hall if they made them too dirty.

We ate the same lunch as the children; plain, well-cooked food and plenty of it, surprisingly enough, since parents, brothers, sisters and even some grandparents had turned up — far more than had been expected — on this first visitors' day.

The children serve themselves and need only take what they want — (no fat meat for Bernard) — but then they are expected to clear their plates. There is lots of butter and milk, too, for breakfast and supper.

After lunch Bernard still had plenty to show me; we looked into his school and into the gymnasium — a fine, well-lit building with all the apparatus you could think of. The showers and wash-rooms are in the separate houses, and there are enough shower-baths so that all the girls can shower one evening and the boys the next. The cinema holds about two hundred, so that they can all see a film about once a week.

The weather was glorious that Sunday, so we took a walk through the "Märchenwald" — the fairy forest, as it is called. It rises steeply from the lake and when you come out on top you get a wonderful view over the water.

From there we came down and had a look at the beginnings of a zoo — guinea pigs, buzzards and a fox. Red squirrels clambered about free in the trees, quite friendly and not a bit shy.

Children of the "Pioneer Republic" on a hike

On the way back to Bernard's house we passed the garage where the five buses are kept. The children had already been out potato-picking on an agricultural production co-operative one wholne morning; the buses had brought them there and fetched them home afterwards.

Then we saw the flats where teachers and other personnel live. Four hundred people are employed full time here, including a hairdresser, shoemaker, carpenter, electrician and so on. Daily expenses for the whole "republic" are between 12,000 and 13,000 marks.

But if you think it costs parents a great deal of money to send their children there you are mistaken; I paid only 15 marks for Bernard — a sort of registration fee — and three marks for his railway fare. This is about what you would pay for two days in an ordinary hotel.

I left the "republic" in the evening with the comfortable feeling that Bernard and his little friends are happy there, and I feel sure they will do their best in school and help wherever they can to show their appreciation for all that is being done for them.

Another Nazi in the News

Herbert Adolf Heinrich BLANKENHORN, newly appointed West German Ambassador to France.

Blankenhorn, who was born in 1904, joined the nazi party in 1938. Throughout the nazi period he served at responsible posts in the German Diplomatic Service, in Athens, Washington, Berne and the Foreign Ministry in Berlin.

In September 1941 he was member of a nazi Foreign Ministry delegation which went on a special trip to the Warsaw Ghetto, and to Vitebsk and Smolensk in the nazi-occupied part of the Soviet Union to study the "pacification" methods used there.

Later in the war he was involved in nazi espionage in Switzerland, and in 1945 he was deported by the Swiss Federal Police as an active nazi.

By 1952 he had become head of the political department of the West German Foreign Ministry, and in 1955 he was appointed permanent West German representative on the NATO Council.

In 1952 the West German news magazine "Spiegel" published specific facts and figures showing that Blankenhorn had been a paid agent of the French intelligence service in the immediate post-war years. Chancellor Adenauer was also implicated in the case. Adenauer and Blankenhorn filed libel charges against the magazine, but when the case came to court they suddenly withdrew the charges when the magazine offered an "apology," which only said that there had been no intention of giving offence. The "apology" did not retract any of the charges.

BACK TO THE MIDDLE AGES

"Health Insurance is Un-West-German"

Powerful forces in West Germany have opened a campaign to end compulsory health insurance and the free medical treatment which is today regarded as indispensible in any modern country.

Leading members of Chancellor Adenauer's Christian Democratic Union have been hinting for some months that they would like to end health insurance, and the campaign received new impetus on October 17th when the "Rheinische Merkur", an important newspaper generally regarded as being very near to Chancellor Adenauer, published a leading article on the subject.

In this article the newspaper claimed that health insurance ran contrary to the principles of free enterprise; that workers could well afford to pay for medical care; and that if people did not go to the doctor because of the cost, then it was their own fault.

Here are some of the main points from this remarkable article:

"Legally-imposed health insurance has the character of compulsion. It is basically irreconcilable with the system of free enterprise if citizens are forced to devote a certain portion of their income to a certain purpose.

"Workers should be forced to pay part of the cost of medical treatment, since the income of 99 percent of all employees well exceeds the physical existence minimum.

"But perhaps it will be claimed that workers are economically not in a position to pay the doctor 100 or 150 marks (between £9 and £14, ed). One must then ask how they manage to pay the installments on their TV sets, their mopeds and their washing machines. And women generally spend between 10 marks and 20 marks monthly at the hairdressers. We have nothing against such expenditure: but health care is a fundamental question which should come first.

"If a worker today is really not in the position to pay a doctor's fee of 100 or 150 marks, then this is not the result of a low income, but of the workers' habit of living from hand to mouth, without accumulating reserves. Workers have brought this habit with them from their proletarian past, and the too-tender care of social insurance has betrayed them into keeping their old habits.

"There is one final objection: if people have to pay part of the bill themselves, then they may be tempted to leave the medical care until it is too late. That we ought to risk."

Bulgaria and Democratic Germany

A communique issued in Sofia on October 12th announced that full agreement had been reached between a delegation of top party and government leaders from the German Democratic Republic which had been visiting Bulgaria, and Bulgarian leaders.

The delegation from the German Democratic Republic was led by Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl and Walter Ulbricht, First Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party; the Bulgarian delegation was headed by Prime Minister Anton Yugoff and Todor Shivkoff, First Secretary of the Bulgarian Communist Party.

The communique recalled the revolutionary internationalist traditions of the Bulgarian and German working class, as exemplified by Georgi Dimitroff, hero of the Reichstag Fire Trial, and German Communist leader Ernst Thaelmann.

Here are some of the main points from the communique:

"True to the ideals of proletarian internationalism, both parties (the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and the Bulgarian Communist Party) are waging a decisive struggle against all attempts to deform Marxism-Leninism and to undermine the unity of the Communist and Workers' parties. They will continue to wage an undeviating struggle against revisionism, which is today the main danger in the international workers' movement... Experiences since 1956 have shown that revisionism plays the role of preparing for counter revolution in the working class movement of the people's democracies.

"Both parties hold that modern revisionism is most clearly expressed in the programme of the Yugoslav Communist League. They reject this programme as damaging to the international workers' movement. They condemn the nationalist chauvinistic campaign of hate against the Bulgarian People's Republic recently waged in Yugoslavia ...

"Both delegations affirm that the characteristic feature of the present world situation is the speedy growth of the forces of peace and socialism. The countries of the socialist camp, with the Soviet Union in the van have, together with all other peace-loving forces, attained important successes in the fight for the defence of world peace ...

"The Bulgarian Communist Party and the Government of the Bulgarian People's Republic stress the important role played by the German Democratic Republic in the fight against the danger of war proceeding from German imperialism. They declare their support for the German Democratic Republic in this fight, and will give every possible help, particularly in the solution of the main economic task ...

"Both Governments will continue to contribute to the strengthening of the unity and brotherly friendship of the countries of the socialist camp, with the Soviet Union in the van, on the basis of proletarian internationalism. In their foreign policy they base themselves on the principle of peaceful coexistence between states with differing social and political systems ...

"Both sides agreed that before the end of the present year discussions on economic problems should be held, with a view to increasing the cooperation between the two countries: the aim should be the most rational use of the economic possibilities ... The development of international tourist traffic was discussed, and it was agreed to increase the number of tourists from the German Democratic Republic who will spend their summer holidays in the Bulgarian People's Republic.

Contest for Re-Building Berlin Centre

All architects in the German Democratic Republic have been invited to compete in a contest for the best plan for the rebuilding of the central portion of Berlin. More than half the buildings in central Berlin were destroyed in the course of the Second World War, and so far there has been little rebuilding in the centre of the city, although individual buildings of historical importance such as the State Opera and the Catholic Cathedral have been restored.

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

Most of us go around with our heads full of odd misconceptions or half-truths about other peoples and places, induced by things ranging from the fairy tales we heard when we were very young to the newspapers we read every day.

Most Europeans, I suppose, have a vague idea at the back of their minds that the Chinese feed almost exclusively on bird's nests and very old eggs; continental Europeans picture England as inhabited by very tweedy men with protruding teeth smoking pipes; and the English for their part think of the French as eating frogs and living madly immoral lives.

But these are the older folk fables: I want to deal today with one of the newer folk fables, induced by newspaper reading. That is the fable of the exotic and dangerous city of Berlin, the city where the "Iron Curtain" runs down the middle of the street.

This popular myth came to my attention again a couple of times in the past few days when a very nice young couple of American tourists dropped in at my office in the main street of East Berlin. They were a normally well-informed progressive couple, but they were so much under the influence of the popular myth about the dangerous East that they had made the ten-minute trip from West Berlin with considerable trepidation, and were very surprised and relieved to discover that it was no more dangerous than a trip from Brooklyn to Manhattan in New York.

Of course, Berlin is a very odd city. It is divided into two halves, with separate administrations, different currencies, different laws, and even different traffic regulations. But at the same time it is a united city, and underground trains and the elevated railway run backwards and forwards between the two halves without any sort of stop for frontiers: and anybody in Berlin, whether a resident or a visitor, is at perfect liberty to wander at will anywhere in the city.

So if your way should lead you at any time to West Berlin, do not hesitate to have a look at East Berlin: and if you should have time, I am always glad to see overseas visitors who drop in to my office.

* * *

During the Second World War, Hitler awarded a medal called the "Knight's Cross" to soldiers and officers of the nazi armed forces who had performed their duties particularly well. During the course of the war he kept on creating new and ever more noble classes for the decoration: first the Knight's Cross with Laurel Wreaths, then the Knight's Cross with Swords; and he crowned the whole lot with the Knight's Cross with Swords and Diamonds.

Dozens of SS Generals were decorated with this medal by Hitler personally for particularly nasty bits of brutality; and in general it could be said quite safely that the holders of the various classes of this distinction were particularly rabid and aggressive officers in Hitler's wars of aggression.

Now, as was to have been expected, the surviving holders of this highest nazi distinction have come together in West Germany, and founded an association with the declared intention of calling upon the Adenauer Government to pay them a special pension for their "outstanding services to the German state".

Early in October, these gentlemen staged their first big get-together in Bonn, the West German capital. 900 of them turned up: and it was interesting to see that a considerable proportion of these old active nazis had been re-activated, and were now wearing the uniform of the West German Army. There was for instance General von Hobe, Chief of Staff to the Inspector General of the West German Armed Forces, and Major General Schimpf, commander of the Third Army Group of the new Wehrmacht.

And the West German Minister of Defence Franz-Josef Strauss went out of his way to honour these old nazis by sending along a 43-man-army band.

There is nothing very new or sensational in all this, you may say. But what I found rather exceptional was the fact that the British, French and United States military attaches in Bonn also attended this old nazi rally. Have they really forgotten what these nazis did during World War Two?

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But now to a pleasanter subject: whisky. Some months ago I mentioned in passing that a nationally-owned liquor factory in Democratic Germany was promising, or threatening, to put its own brand of whisky on the market. I finally laid my hands on a bottle to give it a test. I should like to be able to tell you that socialist whisky beats the old capitalist sort all along the line: I regret to have to tell you that the distillers of Scotland have nothing to worry about. It was undoubtedly the worst whisky I have ever drunk in my life.

But I don't think that this proves anything about the relative merits of capitalism and socialism: these are going to be shown in more vital fields of industrial effort.

* * *

While on the subject of the palate, let us turn our attention to caviar. With almost superhuman restraint I have, in the course of the past two years, refrained from boring readers with the brilliant and exceptional things done and said by my two-year old daughter Miriam. Now I can restrain myself no longer.

A few days ago, a friend returning from a visit to Moscow presented me with a nice little pot of the finest Caspian black caviar. Miriam always wants to taste anything she sees people eating, so in the usual doting-father fashion I gave her a little. Unfortunately she loved it, and we had to be very firm to prevent her from emptying the pot.

That was not the end of the story. Some days later, I was out shopping with her. In a big food store she spotted piles of the little jars in which caviar is sold, and charged across to the counter, yelling at the top of her voice "Caviar, caviar, buy Miriam caviar", to the very considerable amusement of the shoppers and the shop assistants.

The moral of the story is, of course, not to give your child caviar.

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